

To: Whom It May Concern at the DOER
Regarding: The Results of the Recent Manomet Study and Biomass Energy
From: Jesse R. Weeks
Date: 8/11/10

As a father, small business owner, and educator, I would encourage you to PLEASE discontinue your endorsements of biomass energy and discontinue any subsidies or tax incentives for any biomass energy endeavors. The policy of the DOER should not be stretched to suit the private interests of the biomass industry at the expense of public health and the environment. Biomass is NOT a renewable source of energy by any stretch of science and its CO₂ output *greatly* exceeds the CO₂ output of a coal plant equivalent per megawatt hour of electricity produced.

The Manomet study did not evaluate the objective risks related to human health in regards to the proposed plants. In Greenfield MA, for instance, there are 20 schools within a five mile radius of the proposed location of the plant. In addition, the Manomet study failed to identify the impact of “soil shifting.” This phenomenon occurs when dead and ground woods are removed from the forest floor and turned shifted to another location, such as becoming ash to be used as fertilizer in fields. This process, based on the assumption that the ash is in fact “clean” as relied upon by the self-reporting entity of a biomass plant (‘clean’ means including pressure treated wood and pallets containing nails), robs forests of their own natural nutrients needed for long-term sustainability and regenerative growth.

Having talked to literally hundred of people on this matter while collecting signatures for the ballot initiative, the public is largely in complete disbelief that burning trees for energy could possibly be considered sustainable. Trees, which are the same trees that are supposed to reabsorb biomass plant CO₂ emissions, incinerated in minutes take centuries to re-grow. Global warming is already irrefutable science and must be addressed and reduced by new and modern energy methods, not enhanced. Wood is predominantly water which makes its combustion and transfer to energy highly inefficient. The proposed biomass plants would greatly increase statewide pollution emitted from the energy sector (by about 14%) and only marginally increase energy output from the energy sector (less than 1%).

If wood is encouraged to be used as a fuel source, profiteers in a largely unregulated arborist system will cut first and ask questions or pay penalties later. Clear cutting (or deforestation similar to) will inevitably transpire biomass industries are allowed. MA simply doesn’t have sprawling tracts of forest to support these plants and any extensive cutting greatly impact our fall-foliage tourism, as was briefly alluded to in the Manomet study. Further, the demolition waste to energy process greatly diminishes incentives for recycling construction materials.

In addition, please weigh and consider the severe public importance of the following:

1. Stop directing taxpayer funded "clean" energy renewable energy credits and incentives to dirty wood burning biomass plants and instead, direct them towards genuinely clean energy alternatives such as solar, geothermal, appropriately located wind and hydro, and conservation and efficiency measures.
2. Stop permitting new wood burning biomass electric plants and stop promoting and creating incentives for other wood burning biomass plants
3. Take a harder look at the carbon impacts of CHP (combined Heat and Power) biomass plants. The Manomet study used unreasonable assumptions to make forest burning biomass look "less bad" than it really is. The model needs to be more realistic to match the realities on the ground.

Let Massachusetts lead the rest of the world in terms of its environmental energy awareness by eliminating the already outdated and wasteful biomass system of energy. Biomass is not sustainable, efficient, or wanted by the people in MA and should be removed from the energy portfolio of the DOER. Please protect human health and the environment in MA instead of pandering to special interests.

Thank you very much for your foresight and understanding,

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